April 15, 2016

Janice Nowicki
Upton Senior Center
2 Farm Street
Upton, MA   01568

Dear Janice:

We truly appreciate all of the kindness that you and your staff showed to all involved in the tragic fire on Thursday. Your generosity in opening your doors and comforting the people was a blessing and made our role so much easier.

Disasters such as this are devastating, but when the community rallies in support of the victims, it is truly heartwarming.

Thank you and your wonderful staff!

Mary Nathan

Mary Nathan
Disaster Program Manager

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick
Superintendent-Director

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District
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School Committee Members

Joseph M. Hall – Bellingham
Joseph A. Broderick – Blackstone
John C. Lavin, III – Douglas
Anthony M. Yitts – Grafton
Mitchell A. Intinarelli – Hopedale

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Gerald M. Finn – Millville
Jeff T. Koopman – Northbridge

Julie H. Mitchell – Sutton
David R. Bartlett – Upton
James H. Ebbeling – Uxbridge

April 8, 2016

The Honorable Michael O. Moore
State House, Room 109B
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Moore:

On behalf of the citizens of the thirteen towns served by the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District, I write to explore the possibility of securing up to $220,000 in additional state funding to support the District's Chapter 74-approved post-secondary practical nursing program. Such funding would be used to rebate, or a lesser amount would at least offset a portion of, the FY2017 per pupil assessments to those member communities with residents enrolled in this program.

As you may be aware, the Blackstone Valley Tech Practical Nursing Program was launched in 2009 in response to a well-documented statewide nursing shortage. This accredited full-time afternoon program was designed to improve employment opportunities for under-served populations and to strengthen the healthcare resources available to citizens of the Blackstone Valley in light of an ongoing shortage of qualified health care providers and the growing health care needs of an aging population. The program, which has met all benchmarks for graduate licensure and placement in health care careers, is clearly aligned with the work of the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet and the Governor's comprehensive blueprint for economic growth.

While we are delighted that our program has achieved its intended results, we recognize that the longstanding DESE-approved process for cost-sharing by those communities whose residents avail themselves of this post-secondary opportunity has resulted in additional financial challenges for several of our member towns. It is our hope that additional state funding will mitigate some of those challenges and encourage municipal officials to recognize the inherent value of this program to the health and economic well-being of our region. If funding as requested cannot be secured within the proposed FY2017 state budget, it is our hope that additional monies may be identified for this purpose within the FY2018 budget cycle.

Thank you for your past and anticipated support of quality career preparation education. As we seek to respond effectively to workforce needs in our region, I hope that we can count on you and your state legislative colleagues to identify and secure additional state funding to improve the ability of local municipalities to support their citizens' health care career aspirations via enrollment in our highly-regarded nursing program.

With warm regards,

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick
Superintendent-Director

MFF/dp

cc: Grafton, Millbury, Northbridge, & Upton Board of Selectmen Chairs
        Grafton, Millbury, Northbridge, & Upton Finance Committee Chairs

Kindly Note: This communication is sent for information purposes only. Upton has no students currently enrolled in the post-secondary nursing program, so there is no financial impact to your town at this time.